noncommissioned officer. This is daily a squad leader's and team leader's mission. The emphasis on deliberate planning and troop-leading procedures for operations at the most vital level guarantees that much of the insight and experience they gain here can be recalled when time constraints and pressures are greater on a conventional battlefield. The responsibility for everything—from the orders process to thorough precombat inspections—rests squarely on a new generation of sergeants, with senior NCOs there to mentor and provide after-action reviews. A solid foundation in these processes through repetitive use in this environment is the essential element that can then be applied successfully to any given mission.

At the company level, we must continue to hone our techniques for the timely and effective reporting of situations that develop in our area of responsibility. The need for concise, accurate, and current spot reports gives a realistic view to information flow between leaders. Couple that almost daily with the subsequent requests and coordination with other assets, and a synergy is created that would be essential to the modern battlefield. Squads and platoons find themselves directing aircraft onto potential targets, working with scout elements to interpret suspicious traffic, and debriefing staff sections in a manner and frequency that would initially be a painful yet necessary process in combined arms operations.

Lastly, in peace support operations there is the unique value of soldier training that does not come from the tasks we execute as part of a training matrix. The essence of the individual infantryman's responsibility here is also his single greatest benefit in preparation for the battlefield—the demand for a disciplined, confident professional who is flexible in response and effective in the use of minimal force. Soldiers here display the confidence and aggressiveness, even when confronted, that can come only from knowing that they have the necessary skills to succeed in any given situation. They see their leaders adapting to challenging demands and know that the respect this unit is accorded here is won on the merits of each individual every day.

Commitment to operations other than war—especially in troubled areas such as the Balkans—is likely to move forward at a speed governed more by national interest than by the need to accommodate the Army's training goals. Since these deployments are unavoidable, small units must make maximum use of the training opportunities they offer. It is a commitment by the chain of command and a concern not just to separate high intensity conflict goals, but to approach peacekeeping as a bridge that leads to sharper warfighting skills.

While the debate goes on around us, small-unit leaders must employ the creativity and techniques to make sure the deployment places maintaining readiness on an equal footing with operational success.

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Scouts

Their Selection, Training, and Operations

MAJOR MICHAEL T. WILLIAMS

Ever since the first adversaries took to the battlefield to settle their differences, opponents have sought tactical advantage over each other. Tactics seek to exploit those advantages, and they vary from era to era, war to war, and battle to battle. Reconnaissance—seeing and understanding the enemy—is a fundamental issue that drives that evolution.

Here we will revisit the age-old use of the tactical reconnaissance element—the selection, training, and operations of the scouts. As the Israelites did when they ended their 40 years of wandering in the Sinai, commanders continue to dispatch scouts to gather information about their prospective enemies. Joshua, as a wise commander, recognized that intelligence drives operations, and today's leaders should be no less perceptive.

At the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), tactical reconnaissance operations vary from one rotation to the next. Some units deploy their scouts forward, while others do not. Generally, the commander's preference and the abilities of the scout element determine the employment. When time is plentiful, scouts typically receive detailed guidance and instructions for the upcoming mission during intermediate staging base operations, but even then, they rarely get a detailed reconnaissance order. Still, they go forward with an

adequate mission load to gain intelligence for the maneuver commander. In all too many cases, this is their only opportunity to perform as the commander's eyes on the battlefield.

As the operational pace intensifies and compresses planning time, other challenges capture the commander's attention. The battle is joined. Logistics threatens to become a ball and chain to operational flexibility. Personnel losses challenge unit effectiveness. In all the turmoil, the unit may become reactive, surrendering tactical initiative to the opposing force. A key indicator of this confusion is when the scout platoon is overlooked in the planning and execution of follow-on missions.

Observer-controllers (OCs) at the JRTC have learned to look at the scouts to see how well or how poorly a unit is doing. Here are several things OCs consider and reasons they are important.

Scouts continue to watch named areas of interest (NAIs) that no longer help the commander in his decision-making process. The problem may simply be their poor communication skills. On the other hand, it may be that the scouts have not received a change of mission that would have allowed them to shift to newer NAIs. Both of these factors suggest that the battalion, overwhelmed by events, has lost touch with its scouts. The scouts are not being used to gather intelligence on the enemy's strength and weaknesses. The battalion has gone reactive.

The scouts are not properly positioned on the battlefield, and their location takes them out of the battle. The scouts' ability to be out front is limited by the battalion's ability to transport them. The time required for them to react hinders their ability to affect the outcome of the battle. Again, the battalion has lost sight of its single most important reconnaissance asset—its eyes on the battlefield. A battalion that is not seeking out the enemy is allowing the enemy to seek *it* out.

The scouts are used to defend the tactical operations center (TOC) or the battalion trains. Both of these are vital assets that need protection, but other elements in the unit are better suited for defending them. All too often, scouts are given this mission as an afterthought, tacked on to the end of the planning process to answer the belated question, "What do we do with the scouts?" The commander who is not thinking *reconnaissance* is not *thinking*, he is *reacting*.

While many of these reasons generally stem from command and staff planning factors, others come from the selection and training of the scouts themselves. Although most scouts are in excellent physical condition, they are not always tactically and technically proficient in reconnaissance and surveillance.

OCs often notice that scouts who are deployed forward of the battalion spend more time looking for and moving to their NAIs than performing reconnaissance and surveillance on these areas.

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Several factors influence this trend. First, scouts are routinely assigned more NAIs than they can observe effectively, and no priorities have been assigned to them. Scouts can either cover a few NAIs effectively or cover a lot of NAIs ineffectively.

Even though part of this problem lies with the staff and planning process, the scouts themselves must recognize and react to their own capabilities and limitations. This recognition comes with experience based on training, with little or no guidance on priorities, along with inadequate training, the scouts do not have the time or the manpower to conduct the mission successfully. In the absence of guidance, scouts must ask for it.

This initial factor flows into the second—the same lack of guidance to the scout platoon leader cripples his ability to plan a detailed mission. Additionally, a lack of planning time results in inadequate orders, no rehearsals, and poor tactical reconnaissance—and most important, a commander who doesn't see the battlefield.

Given the first two factors, scout leaders at platoon and squad level tend to focus on avoiding detection. Force protection is a priority, of course, but the scout mission of reconnaissance and surveillance remains the most important goal. If the scouts are merely out there trying to move around and cover too many NAIs, they are needlessly putting themselves at risk.

Even if the scouts are given a well-planned and resourced mission, they may not be trained to get out there, gather, and report all the commander's critical information accurately and promptly. A good scout is more than a remote video; he is a forward deployed military analyst. He recognizes the indicators that an enemy is preparing to attack, defend, or withdraw, and he can relay that information to the commander, who can best use it to make a critical tactical decision.

Besides following the logic of training scouts, giving them a good mission, and teaching them what to look for, their training must teach them how to get this information back to the commander. The very nature of the scouts' mission suggests that they need special communications gear and training on how to use it. OCs at JRTC report that this vital link is often overlooked.

Let us pause here. We can talk on and on about the scouts' shortcomings and why certain things happen at the JRTC, but one of the recurring trends is the lack of proper training.

A well-trained scout can analyze terrain, tell where the enemy is likely to be, and know how the friendly forces can exploit that information. All too often, however, scouts are not well-versed in identifying these indicators, much less in analyzing their meaning.

We need to examine the selection process and the training of a scout platoon soldier, as follows:

In the typical infantry battalion, a vacancy appears in a position in the scout platoon in the course of normal attrition. The scout platoon leader and the headquarters company commander, raise the need for replacements with the operations officer and the battalion

commander. The scout platoon leader proposes a selection process, and the commander is free to make changes. The commander then issues his guidance for the selection of the new members and the course of their training.

Once the process is approved, the operations officer and the scout platoon leader prepare the tasking for the company commanders. This step is vital to the success of the selection. The tasking includes the number of prospective candidates per company, what the selection process entails, and the training schedule. Although soldiers are often encouraged to volunteer, the company commander is the approving authority when choosing qualified candidates.

During the selection phase, the prospective candidates are put through rigorous physical and mental challenges. These challenges include an Army Physical Fitness Test, an Army Swim Test, a foot march of 12 to 15 miles, day and night land navigation, physical training of various sorts used to test upper and lower body strength, running events ranging from four to ten miles, memorization games that test soldiers' ability to assimilate and recall information and basic infantry skills. After the selection process, there is no doubt that these soldiers are physically fit and capable of handling the physical demands of being scouts. That's a good start.

Next, the newly selected members must be trained as scouts. This means they have to be transformed from fighters into observers—the eyes and ears of the battalion. This training entails teaching the potential scout the art of closing in on the enemy undetected and observing his every visible and audible move. Upon completion, the soldiers join their respective teams where they will get most of their scout training from veterans in the platoon, including a few who have attended sniper school.

Therein lies a potential pitfall. These "seasoned" professionals have learned through much trial and error. On-the-job training is valuable and can offer many lessons if it is used properly. But it is extremely important that the trainers and the trainees experience and see what works. Unfortunately, this does not routinely occur in an internally driven scout training program. Once the soldiers' initial orientation is complete, they are catapulted into situational and field training exercises that test and evaluate their newfound craft. At the end of a 30- to 60-day grace period, they at least receive the title of "scouts." But they may or may not know what they're doing.

Their brethren in the reconnaissance community, the long range surveillance (LRS) elements, offer an interesting contrast to the infantry scouts. These soldiers undergo the same selection process and rigorous training—with two major exceptions:

The first is that all the trainers of the new recruits are graduates of the Long Range Surveillance Leaders Course (LRSLC). This course was designed with the reconnaissance leader in mind, based in the heart of the Ranger community with its own company structure and program of instruction. Each student attends the 33-day course and undergoes a vigorous physical, mental, and academic challenge. The LRSLC begins with an Army Physical Fitness Test, Army Swim Test, and day and night long-range land navigation test.

The LRSLC training system is now open to infantry scouts, and we must revamp our training to take advantage of it.

Students then swiftly move into the academic portion of the course. They are taught and tested on vehicle recognition, both of the former Soviet Union and American; communications with HF and FM radios including propagation and antenna theory; and intelligence preparation of the battlefield. The students are then taught and graded on their ability to receive and properly write a detailed reconnaissance or surveillance order. Additionally, they learn the planning and construction of hide sites and mission support sites, conduct tracking and countertracking in the field, and basic survivability, including standards of escape and evasion.

To complete the course, the students are graded in a situational and field training exercise on all the above skills to determine whether they will qualify and graduate. In most cases, 50 to 90 percent of the members of the team have graduated from the LRSLC. That means that the "seasoned professionals" inside the LRS detachments not only know what *right* looks like, they know how to *do* it. The institutional knowledge within the unit sustains itself and at the same time expands from external training.

The LRSLC training system is now open to infantry scouts, and we must revamp our training to take advantage of it. Until now, units have selected the most physically fit and brightest young men in the battalion, have placed them in the scout platoon, but have not equipped them with the training they need to succeed on the battlefield. These young soldiers will give it their best and work very hard to accomplish the mission. Commanders must train their men for success. Leaders should look closely into the training and development of our scouts. The LRSLC cadre is determined to provide quality training, not only to the LRS community, but to the entire reconnaissance family. For more details on the course, leaders should visit the Fort Benning web site or contact their division's LRS detachment or Corps' LRS company. I am sure they will be happy to share whatever manuals and training they can.

In conclusion, the need for reconnaissance never ends. Satisfying that need means understanding what reconnaissance can provide and incorporating it into the planning process. The commander who strikes out with inadequate reconnaissance may join the rolls of Custer and the 7th Cavalry at the Little Big Horn or the ranks of the 106th Infantry Division at St. Vith. The commander who wins the reconnaissance fight wins the battle!

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